

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
ANNOUNCES MAJOR REGULATORY REFORM IN THE
HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

The Department of Health (DOH) Environmental Health Administration announces that it will propose major amendments to the Hazardous Waste Regulations in the *D.C. Register* on Friday, March 4, 2005, for public review and comment. The proposed amendments will allow the Department to regulate hazardous waste more effectively, in a manner consistent with federal law, and to focus its efforts on pollution prevention.

Current District regulations, which are over 600 pages long, contain many provisions that are fundamentally different than the federal hazardous waste regulations, affecting the categories of generators regulated, materials and quantities of waste regulated, as well as procedural and reporting requirements. These differences have led to confusion and frustrated compliance efforts. The new District regulations (which will be approximately 50 pages in length) will incorporate the federal regulations by reference with certain exceptions and modifications.

The new regulations will provide improved protection for human health and the environment by:

- Strengthening and clarifying District prohibitions on illegal dumping; the incineration, land treatment, land disposal, and underground injection of hazardous waste; and the burning of used oil;
- Updating the regulations: including new cleanup provisions; organic emission standards for tanks and containers; standards for managing low-level radioactive waste that is mixed with hazardous waste; enhanced public participation provisions; and stronger enforcement provisions; and
- Improving compliance and enforcement by establishing a coherent regulatory framework.

The new regulations will assist the regulated community by:

- Narrowing the differences between the federal and the District regulatory programs, which will allow regulated entities to avail themselves of standard practices, training, manuals, and forms;
- Providing certainty and consistency in regulatory oversight;
- Replacing complex biennial reporting requirements for small quantity generators with a simple annual reporting form. The Department will design the form to assist these generators in improving their waste management practices and in reducing the amount and toxicity of hazardous waste generated;
- Providing the regulated community with the same incentives to recycle their wastes that are available under the federal regulations; and
- Reducing the costs of doing business by promoting waste minimization and environmentally sound waste management strategies.

The new regulations will improve government operations by:

- Improving the effectiveness of the hazardous waste program. DOH staff will - with a few limited exceptions - be able to follow the federal regulations, eliminating the need to constantly address the many differences that currently exist between the federal and District regulations;
- Reducing the time and cost required to keep District regulations current; and
- Allowing staff to collect meaningful data that can be used to target and improve public outreach and education, compliance assistance, and pollution prevention activities.

To obtain additional information on this **major regulatory reform** effort that is underway in the Environmental Health Administration, please contact the Department of Health Office of Government Relations at (202) 442-5954.